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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 30 | Min 18 | Humidity 46% Clear with periodic clouds Sensex 71,072 | Nifty 21,616 | Gold 62,012 | Silver 71,020 | Dollar 82.99 | Euro 89.29 | GBP 104.69

Persons with disabilities made to wait to get verified by doctors at govt hospitals for Unique Disability IDs

PATIENCE

PwDs with unique ID cards eligible for welfare schemes

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With lack of facilities at government hospitals, people with disabilities (PwDs) are finding it tough to get necessary verification done by the doctors.

The verification will enable PwDs to appear before the designated specialists/medical board for disability assessment and secure a Unique Disability ID Card.

The PwDs with Unique Disability ID Card are eligible for benefits of welfare schemes.

Some of the PwDs complain that they are not able to get verification certificates from doctors at government hospitals. They said that they are compelled to visit the government hospital multiple times to get the verification done.

For example, Tejaswini Hegde, a PwD, registered her name online for verification on February 28, 2023. Tejaswini's enrollment number is 2918/00000/2302/1897819. She can avail verification by the medical officers at 14 government hospitals,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

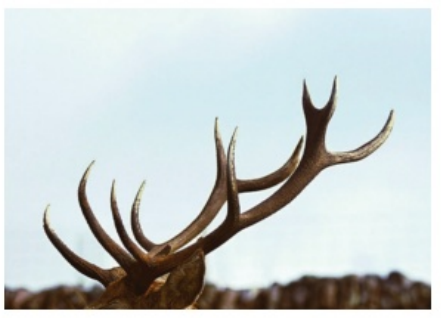
KAUSHIK JN

"The government must make arrangements to enable the PwDs to have verification certificates at their door steps

— Tejaswini Hegde, UDID Card applicant

Why declare wildlife trophies now

Just 20 people from state have surrendered items so far in window that closes on April 9



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Nearly a month ago, the state government issued a notification under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLPA), allowing citizens to surrender undeclared wildlife or animal articles in their possession.

The notification issued on January 10 was aimed at providing a chance for citizens to declare animal articles or trophies, which do not have a certificate of ownership.

However, the scheme so far has evoked only lukewarm responses.

According to the officials at the Karnataka forest department (KFD), just 20 people from across the state have come forward to surrender these items.

"We have received 20 surrenders so far. Most of these are from Bengaluru Circle followed by some items from South Canara Circle and Shivamogga Circle. These items include elephant tusks, tiger claws, antlers, gaur horns and pelts of mostly spotted deer. The total number of items received is 50," said Kumar Pushkar, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Karnataka forest department.

The scheme was announced by Karnataka forest, environment and ecology minister Eshwar Khandre. This was after the state government realised that some people might still be possessing wildlife artefacts

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Flamenco flair

Recipient of the prestigious Spanish National Dance Award, Marco Flores is a distinguished Flamenco dancer and choreographer. Flores's latest creation, Vengo Jondo, is a nuanced expression that plays with words, embodying qualities such as depth, solidity, austerity, and tangency. In the realm of flamenco slang, it establishes connections with tradition while delving into the artist's profound, personal truths. The piece serves as a reflection of the individuality of the three artists involved, maintaining a strong connection to tradition while adhering to the sincerity of their contemporary language.

Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar, Bangalore
When: February 17, 7:30 pm

02 Melody and celebrations

Nexus Koramangala Mall will mark its 20th anniversary with an unforgettable live concert by the acclaimed band Masala Coffee. Masala Coffee, known for their fusion of traditional Indian music with contemporary sounds, promises to deliver a spellbinding performance that will captivate audiences of all ages. Renowned for their electrifying stage presence and soul – stirring melodies, Masala Coffee guarantees an evening filled with unforgettable musical moments.

Where: Nexus Koramangala Mall
When: February 17, 7 pm

03 Mourning together

Is Alfonso di Nola writes in La Morte Trionfata, mourning is the set of social practices and psychic processes aroused by the death of a loved one. The disappearance of funeral rites and communal support leaves individuals confronting loss in a stark, isolated manner. In this context, the performers of Stuporosa, directed by Francesco Marilungo, respond with tears. Unmotivated and seemingly without reason, in this exploration, crying becomes the only conceivable reaction to an inevitable state of mourning.

Where: Ranga Shankara
When: February 18 – 7.30 pm

Uneasy riders

Auto drivers gathered at Freedom Park on Monday to register their ongoing protest against bike taxis still operating in the city

PIC: KAUSHIK JN

Coaching class commandments

No early morning or late evening tuitions, just 5 hours daily, infra requirements and more

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It is common to observe students waking up early for morning tuitions or returning home late due to evening tuitions. Additionally, many coaching centres conduct tuition classes for more than five hours a day. However, all this may become a thing of the past as the Union Ministry of Education has introduced new rules for coaching centres. According to the latest guidelines, coaching centres are required to conduct classes in a manner that is not excessive for students, limiting it to a maximum of five hours per day. Moreover, the coaching hours should be neither too early in the morning nor too late in the evening.

A senior government official highlighted the pressing concerns related to private coaching centres, particularly in light of increasing cases of student suicides, fire incidents, insufficient facilities, and teaching methodologies. "The country witnesses a growing number of unregulated private coaching centres, lacking a structured policy framework. Instances of these centres imposing exorbitant fees, subjecting students to undue stress leading to suicides, and incidents resulting in the loss of lives have been widely reported in the media. Consequently, guidelines have been issued to address and rectify these challenges," said an official.

Guidelines come in wake of complaints against tuition centres

> **"The country witnesses a growing number of unregulated private coaching centres, lacking a structured policy framework. The guidelines will address these challenges** –Govt official

Infra needs

The guidelines define the infrastructure requirements for coaching centres, specifying that within the basic structure of the centre, a minimum of one sq mt area should be allocated for each student during a class/batch. It is emphasised that the infrastructure should be in proportion to the number of students enrolled. The building is expected to adhere to fire safety codes, building safety codes, and other standards, necessitating the acquisition of a Fire and Building Safety Certificate from the appropriate authorities.

Coaching centres are required to have a first aid kit and medical assistance/treatment facility. The display of referral services, including information on hospitals, doctors, emergency services, police, fire service and women helplines, etc., is mandated, ensuring that students are informed about these resources. The building should prioritise electrification, proper ventilation, and adequate lighting arrangements in each classroom.

Moreover, provisions for safe and potable drinking water for all students and staff are essential. The installation of CCTV cameras at necessary locations within the centre is recommended, with an emphasis on maintaining robust security measures. Additionally, a complaint box or register is to be made available for students to raise concerns, and coaching centre are required to establish a committee for the redressal of complaints/grievances.

Coaching centres are mandated to ensure the timely completion of classes as per the prospectus. Additionally, classes for students simultaneously enrolled in institutions or schools should not overlap with their regular school hours.

Remedial classes

To support students needing extra assistance in academics, the centres may offer remedial or support classes.

"Moreover, the curriculum and class timetable should be thoughtfully spaced out, providing students with ample time to relax and recuperate, thereby avoiding unnecessary pressure. The centre is responsible for scheduling weekly offs for both students and tutors, ensuring a conducive learning environment. Importantly, there should be no assessment tests or exams on the day following the weekly off. During main regional festivals, centres are encouraged to customise leaves to allow students to connect with their families and experience emotional uplift. The overall class structure should be designed to avoid excessive duration, not exceeding five hours in a day. Importantly, the coaching hours should be balanced, avoiding extremes of early mornings or late evenings," the rules state.

Building spree continues on weak foundation

RTI application reveals BBMP engineer's neglect when it comes to inspecting buildings or issuing commencement certificate

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The Karnataka High Court directed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to mandate property owners, supervisors, and architects to file affidavits after completion of the foundation and the bottom part of the foundation of any building. It is mandatory for the builder or property owner to avail of a commencement certificate from the BBMP authorities when work begins.

However, it seems to be common knowledge that most of the BBMP engineers do not bother whether the foundation and footing works are completed. They also do not bother whether the builder or owner applied for a commencement certificate. The other shocking thing is that there is no punishment for not having a commencement certificate though it is a mandatory as per the 5.3 (ii) of the BBMP Bye Laws 2003. Generally all construction and work for which a licence is required shall be subject to inspection by the BBMP engineers and certain types of construction involving unusual hazards or requiring constant inspection, shall be continuously inspected by the BBMP engineers.

> **"The suggestions already exist as part of the existing rules/statutes (dating back to 2003) and are being willfully ignored/ violated by the BBMP engineer in collusion with errant builders**

Within 15 days from the date of the receipt of intimation under bye-law 5.2, the BBMP engineers shall inspect the site to verify the line out marked for the building according to the sanctioned plan. The owner shall commence the work after the grant of commencement certificate. If the commencement certificate is not issued within a period of 15 days from the date of intimation by the owner, the construction may proceed according to the sanctioned plan.

However, BBMP engineers have many times neither bothered to inspect nor to issue commencement certificates. A case in point has emerged through an RTI application. BBMP Assistant Director (Town Planning), in a reply (August 21, 2021) to a RTI application by Suhas Ananth Rajkumar of Nagavarapalya, has stated that he could not find documents relating to a commencement certificate related to a particular building.

The rules call for the builder or property owner to appoint an architect for supervision of the construction work but most of the builders and property owners terminate the services of architects as soon as they get building or apartment plans sanctioned by the BBMP Town Planning Department.

For example, a builder appointed architect Ramesh S to supervise the quality of construction on June 20, 2019. As soon as the building plan was sanctioned, the builder submitted an application to the BBMP Town Planning Assistant Director (East) stating that the services of Ramesh have been terminated.

Ironically, the application has no details of date or place.

Meanwhile, Suhas Ananth Rajkumar, an advocate, said the suggestions of the High Court are well-intentioned. "The suggestions already exist as part of the existing rules/statutes (dating back to 2003) and are being willfully ignored/violated by the BBMP engineer in collusion with errant builders.

Therefore the solution is not in reiterating the same provisions but by pushing for their enforcement," said Rajkumar.

Vinod Jacob, Namma Bengaluru Foundation, said that despite clear zoning classifications outlined in the RMP Act and directives from the honourable court to adhere to them, the persistent disregard for plan sanctions on the ground highlights a concerning pattern of rule violations and discrepancies.

Bus conductor was rude, pulled my arm: Senior citizen

A senior citizen alleged that he was manhandled by a conductor on a Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus recently.

The resident of Lingarajapuram has written to the BMTC and has sought action against the conductor. He alleged the conductor of the bus he boarded around 9:10 am on Friday near Jyothi school in Lingarajapuram, pulled his arm, asking him to move. He said the conductor continued to ask him to move inside, despite being told that he was a heart patient and wished to stand in the front to alight with ease. The senior citizen also claimed that the bus was not crowded to warrant rude behaviour. He also alleged the conductor threatened to assault him and used inappropriate language. "I got down at the Coles Park stop and went to the Shivajinagar bus stand to complain. They said I should report it at the Majestic bus stand," he wrote, pointing to the lack of an effective offline grievance redressal system.

Nagrathna, a retired bank employee, said public transportation systems are lacking when it comes to senior citizens' needs. "Bus shelters too lack most amenities required to make a senior citizen feel welcome. Most often than not, there are no shelters. The BMTC must also make announcements regarding the penalties that are levied if other commuters do not vacate the seats reserved for senior citizens," she said. **BMB**

Biker in soup with 350 violations, ₹3.2 lakh in fines

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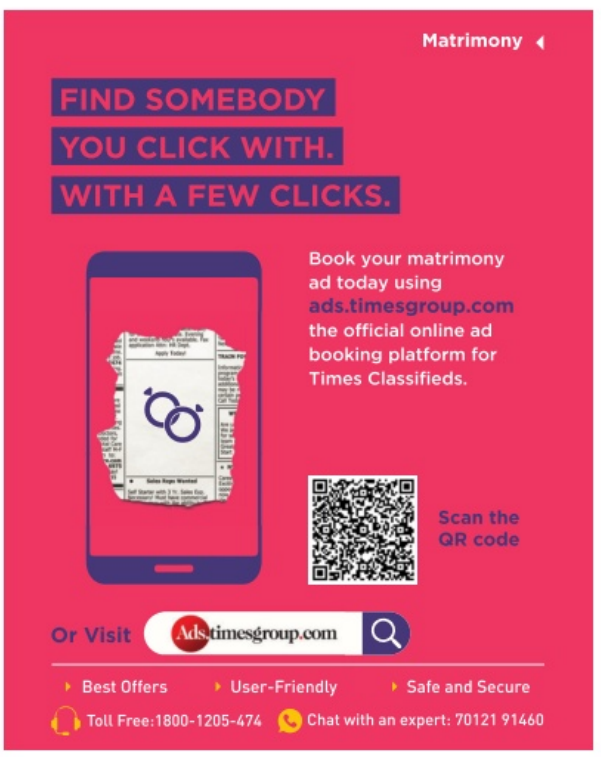
In a startling development, Bengaluru traffic police have found that a significant Rs 3.2 lakh fine is attached to a motorbike registered to a resident of Sudhamanagar. The owner has been instructed to settle the outstanding amount promptly, with a stern warning of potential consequences for non-payment.

Reports indicate that the motorbike has accrued a staggering 350 violations over recent months, spanning infractions such as improper lane usage, failure to wear a helmet, and distracted driving. Law enforcement officers have visited the bike owner's residence to deliver formal notices regarding the violations.

Expressing inability to pay the exorbitant fine, the owner cited the bike's market value at Rs 30,000. However, authorities have offered a payment plan option, cautioning that failure to comply may result in the filing of a formal complaint.

This incident is not isolated, as Bengaluru police have encountered similar cases in the past. Recently, another motorbike with 99 outstanding charges was seized, leading to the detention of its owner and subsequent legal action, including the revocation of their driving licence.

In a separate instance in August, authorities apprehended an individual attempting to evade payment of fines for 46 violations on their bike. The offender was compelled to settle the dues immediately, totaling Rs 13,850.



Pipeline work drags on as drains clogged with slime

Gottigere residents demand prevention of sewage flow into drains, speedy completion of work

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Residents of Gottigere and surrounding areas have been suffering a lot ever since the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) began laying underground drainage (UGD) pipes. The work refuses to get over and the delay has resulted in sewage being let into drains.

The residents of Shankar Nagar in Gottigere ward and MLA Layout, Kalena Agrahara in Begur ward are the worst affected due to the delay in completion of the UGD works that began last year. The residents are urging the authorities concerned to take measures to complete the work soon. They demand that authorities ensure proper disposal of waste and take measures to prevent sewage being let into roadside drains.

Vineela, a resident of Gottigere, said the residents had complained to the BWSSB officials last year. "The BWSSB engineers visited the spot for inspection but nothing has been done till date to fix the problem. Initially, sewage was discharged into an open plot near our home, but since the plot's owner has closed off the land, the sewage now has nowhere to flow to. Consequently, it accumulates around our homes, causing mosquito infestations and unpleasant odours. We are compelled to keep our children indoors because of unhealthy conditions. Despite being situated in a well-developed part of the city, our neighbourhood lacks proper sewage management," said Vineela.

Shantesh, a resident of Begur, said that roadside drains meant for carrying rainwater to the nearest storm water drain are choked with garbage and silt. "The authorities concerned are not ensuring cleaning of the drains on a regular basis. This is causing a bad smell and it has also become a breeding ground for mosquitoes," said Shantesh.

One of the drains at Gottigere

Demanding that authorities take measures to ensure that drains are free from sewage and garbage, Poongothai Paramasivam, governing council member of Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party said the roadside drains are clogged and at some stretches they practically do not exist due to encroachment. "The BBMP officials must inspect the area on a regular basis and ensure the roadside drains are free from garbage and sewage. The authorities have to create awareness among the residents on the importance of keeping drains clean. The authorities must take action against those who pollute and encroach the drains," said Paramasivam.

> **The BBMP officials must inspect the area on a regular basis and ensure the roadside drains are free from sewage. The authorities have to create awareness**
>
> –Poongothai Paramasivam, BNP

A BWSSB engineer said the UGD work has been in progress since last year and it will be completed by the end of this year. "Some of the houses have no UGD connection. Letting sewage into roadside drains is against the norms. I expect the UGD works to be completed as per the schedule," said BWSSB engineer.

When informed about pollution of road side drains, BBMP assistant executive engineer said the BBMP workers are attending to the problems in and around Gottigere. "We will clean the roadside drains that are clogged with garbage if the residents contact us. A few residents have complained twice and we fixed those problems," said the BBMP engineer.

How hookah bars managed to dodge GST

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The Karnataka government had ordered an immediate ban on sales, consumption, possession and advertising of hookah products. The Member of High Power Committee on Tobacco Control - Government of Karnataka Dr Vishal Rao has now raised concerns on hookah bars attempting to manipulate GST rates.

Given the serious health risks associated with hookah smoking, the state government took decisive action by banning hookah smoking across the state by amending the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).

Dr Rao said, "Hookah bars have come under scrutiny for attempting to exploit a loophole in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system to avoid the prescribed 28% GST rate and a 72% cess, commonly known as a "sin tax", by serving hookah as part of their food and beverage offerings. This controversial practice has raised significant concerns among regulatory authorities and public health advocates."

Recently, the Karnataka government banned sale of hooka products

He pointed out that the strategy employed by hookah bars involves presenting hookah as a component of food and beverages, thereby subjecting it only to a 5% GST rate. Proponents of this approach argue that hookah can be classified as an article for human consumption, allowing it to fall under the lower tax bracket. "However, this argument is contentious, as hookah is not a traditional food item and is widely acknowledged to pose significant health risks, including potential harm to respiratory and cardiovascular systems," he said.

Further he pointed out that it has been observed that hookah bars may be neglecting to display health warnings while serving hookah, further exacerbating concerns about their compliance with public health and safety regulations. "The absence of prominent health advisories raises serious questions about the establishments' commitment to safeguarding the well-being of their patrons.The implications of this practice extend beyond potential tax evasion, touching upon broader issues of public health, consumer protection, and regulatory compliance."

Dr. Rao urged regulators and policymakers to address this matter urgently, emphasising on the need for appropriate measures to prevent the exploitation of tax regulations and uphold public health and safety standards.

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Losing the plot
Jayanagar

Garbage has been unlawfully disposed of in an empty area on 38th Cross, 16th A Main, 4th T Block Jayanagar. Concerned authorities must take note and take action to get the space cleared.

Take it away
Jayanagar

At Jayanagar–5 th Main Road, 4th block, the workers have not been picking up the garbage. A citizen tried to complain on a phone number provided, but that number too has remained switched off for months.

Dead lake
KR Puram

The Kithiganur lake has been dead for five years and no panchayat authority or rural development officials of KR Puram, Mahadevapura constituency have bothered to save the lake.

Sanctuary is wind beneath injured parakeets' wings

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Amidst cases of many birds getting injured after getting entangled in manja or due to other reasons, a sanctuary named 'Whistling House' has been set up at the People for Animals (PfA) Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Centre, providing hope for parakeets in need.

Donated by the 'Total Equal Foundation', this space serves as a haven for rehabilitating parakeets, highlighting the crucial role of such enclosures in wildlife hospitals.

Rescued from perils like fortune tellers' cages, manja threads, and electric wires, parakeets will now find refuge in the enclosure. Tailored care helps them recover from injuries, practice flight, and rediscover their natural instincts. In situations where parakeets endure cruel treatment, such as feather plucking by fortune tellers, the centre conducts feather implantation procedures and rehabilitation to help them relearn how to fly.

'The Whistling House' is designed to maximise the well-being of its avian inhabitants, with ample space, enrichment activities, and exposure to natural sunlight fostering both physical and psychological recovery.

Col. Dr Navaz Shariff, Chief Veterinarian at PfA Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Centre, said, "Our primary goal is to ensure comprehensive care and rehabilitation for these beautiful birds. Every aspect of the enclosure has been meticulously planned for their recovery. Home to a diverse array of parakeet species, the facility includes separate areas for short-term confinement and observation."

Birds rescued from perils like fortune tellers' cages, manja threads, and electric wires will now find refuge in the enclosure

As of January 2024, PfA has rescued nearly 2,000 parakeets belonging to five species. In 2022, 138 parakeets were rehabilitated and released, and in 2023, the numbers soared to 176.

Speaking about the benefits of the enclosure, Dr Shariff said, "Activities aiding complex recoveries to strengthen wings and limbs, partly transparent roof, allowing vital Vitamin D exposure for the parakeets and continuous ventilation ensuring a well-ventilated and healthy environment. This apart, there is use of eco-friendly materials to a great extent and installation of tape across glass to prevent birds from flying in, ensuring their safety."

Bengaluru's rose exports bloom

Record highs for Valentine's Day expected

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Bengaluru, renowned for its IT exports, also shines in rose exports, with rising demands worldwide. With Valentine's Day approaching, Bengaluru is all set to export roses. Last year the city saw a staggering 5,89,300 kg of roses exported from Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), marking a notable 14% increase compared to the previous year.

International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) Managing Director Dr M Vishwanath said, "The roses grown around Bengaluru are of the highest quality and they remain fresh for around eight to 10 days. Hence, there is a great demand for Bengaluru roses. So, we supply roses from Bengaluru to other destinations in the country as well as to other countries as well." Vinod Kumar, a rose trader, shared, "Last year, we were receiving around 7 lakh stems to our market and this year we are expecting around 10 lakh stems. This year, there is a great demand from UAE and Europe. We are expecting high volume of business which is good news for both the farmers and buyers."

IFAB in Bengaluru sources roses from Bengaluru rural, Chikkaballapur, and Ramanagar districts, catering to both domestic and international markets. With Valentine's Day around the corner, demand for premium rose varieties is soaring, fueling a thriving export market.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Bengaluru's rose exports have rebounded impressively, with shipments reaching 5.15 lakh kg in 2022, a remarkable feat considering the subdued Valentine's celebrations globally. The popularity of Bengaluru's Dutch variety roses remains unparalleled, commanding high demand from Europe, the Gulf, the US, and beyond.

Rose farms anticipate robust demand for February 14, especially for the iconic red roses symbolising love. However, the versatility of Bengaluru's rose production extends beyond Valentine's Day, with white roses gaining traction for occasions like Mother's Day and Christmas. Notably, the Saudi market exhibits a preference for coloured roses, showcasing the diverse appeal of Bengaluru's floral exports.

In 2020, rose exports from Bengaluru were hampered by the pandemic, with only 2.7 lakh kg shipped from KIA. However, in 2021, exports rebounded significantly, with approximately 5.15 lakh kg transported to various destinations. The trend continued in 2022, witnessing a remarkable 14% increase, with 5,89,300 kg of roses exported. As for 2023, while specific figures are pending, the trend suggests continued growth in Bengaluru's rose export industry.

The city saw 5,89,300 kg of roses exported from Kempegowda International Airport last year

Shock at dry V-Day

Business establishments in Bengaluru express dismay over the prospect of a 'dry' Valentine's Day due to restrictions on liquor sales. Chethan Hegde, the head of the Bengaluru chapter of the National Restaurant Association of India, voiced concerns in a letter addressed to the Election Commission. He highlighted that authorities had ordered a ban on serving liquor from February 14 (5 pm) until 6 am on February 17 across the city. This ban is expected to result in significant financial losses for the industry, as there are approximately 3,700 establishments in Bengaluru affected by the ban. With an estimated revenue shortfall of around Rs 300 crore for the government and disruption to business valued at over Rs 500 crore, the impact is substantial. Hegde stressed the financial strain on businesses, citing expenses such as license fees, worker salaries, building rents, and other overhead costs totaling approximately Rs 20,000 per establishment. He estimated that the industry would suffer losses amounting to Rs 8 to Rs 9 crore. Given the low voter turnout in the ongoing elections for the teachers' constituency, with only 16,000 votes cast, Hegde urged authorities to reconsider the four-day closure of establishments and make a decision that balances public health concerns with the economic impact on businesses.

> **The roses grown around Bengaluru are of the highest quality and stay fresh for 8-10 days** –M Vishwanath, IFAB

IN BRIEF

Rider dies after being hit by KSRTC bus

A 50-year-old man died after his motorcycle was allegedly hit by a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus near Yeshwanthpur Metro station here on Monday, police said.

Rajendra, who worked in a private company, was heading to the GST office when the accident took place at around 10.30 am, they said.

According to the police, the KSRTC bus from Tumakuru depot was heading towards Majestic when the victim came under the vehicle after his bike mirror brushed against the bus. DR Siri Gowri, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic North), confirmed the detainment of the bus driver, who is currently undergoing questioning. The collision involved the KSRTC bus, originating from Tumakuru Depot and heading towards Majestic at the time of the accident.

The injured was taken to the hospital where he succumbed, a senior police officer said.

"We registered a case and arrested the accused driver in connection with the accident," he said.

BMB & agencies

Govt all for US consulate in B'luru

State Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge on Monday said that the Karnataka government would provide all support to the US government for starting a consulate in Bengaluru.

Speaking to delegates of the US Trade mission here, the minister pointed out that a huge number of students and IT employees from Bengaluru visit the US on a regular basis and requested the US government to set up a consulate in the city to facilitate their visa and other formalities.

Sharath Bachegowda, Chairman of Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (KEONICS) who was also present at the event, reiterated the minister's stand.

PTI

Change of plans: BMTC recalls tender for e-buses

State govt permits reduction in bank guarantee given by suppliers

File photo of a recent roll-out of 100 electric buses in the city

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The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation has recalled the tender for 9 m Midi Non-AC buses and 12 m low floor AC buses after the state government permitted a reduction in bank guarantee given by service providers under gross cost control (GCC) model. The reduction in bank guarantee is likely to reduce the per/km GCC rate as well and encourage more participation.

BMTC has recalled the tender for 440 electric buses comprising 120 9m non-ac buses and 320 12 low-floor AC buses as the state government decided to reduce the overall bank guarantee required to be submitted by service providers. The change is also likely to reduce the operational cost paid by BMTC in the form of per km charges.

> **The state government has removed the mandate for service providers to give 5% of the total cost for five years. Now, they will only be required to pay the same for one year** –BMTC official

For procure, supply, Operate and Maintain the Buses, and procure, supply and maintain all plant and machinery the buses by the service providers, BMTC pays a rate per km with an agreement with the service provider to procure and operate up to agreed-upon minimum kilometres per day.

"We have recalled the tender for all-electric vehicles being procured under the GCC model. The state government had removed the mandate for service providers to give 5 per cent of the total cost for five years. Now, they will only be required to pay the same for one year. This will reduce the bank guarantee required to 8 per cent and will be only paying 1/12 the previous guarantee. For example: For the 320 buses, they would have to give bank guarantee, they would have to pay Rs 113 crore but now will only have to pay Rs 900 crore," said a senior BMTC official.

The measure is also likely to bring down the operational cost paid by BMTC. "Currently, we had estimated that the operational cost for these buses would be Rs 63.90 per km and the new change is likely to bring it further down. The measure will be beneficial for both BMTC and service providers," he added.

The 120 9m electric non-AC buses are being procured under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and State Urban Transport Fund (SUTF) of the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT). These buses will have to run for 63,000 km per year with 180 assured Km/day/bus X 350 days. The 320 Ac low-floor e-buses are being procured under the scheme for Special assistance to States for capital investment 2023-24. These buses will have to run an assured 250km per day.

Curtains on cracking concert

Blend Alive India in Concert - Spring Fest wrapped up successfully with a blend of vibrant melodies and Indian cuisine, led by Supratiek Ghosh, founder of Aurko. Held at Garuda Mall's CBD venue, the event fused music and dining, coinciding with the mall's 18th-anniversary celebration. The lineup featured Mame Khan, Aurko, and Alive India Rockstars, offering a unique experience.

Event featuring big names is also a charity programme that sponsors musicians through a scholarship

Supratiek Ghosh emphasised the event's mission to support emerging musicians through initiatives like Musicians Social Responsibility (MSR) and the Studio Residency Scholarship Charity Program – "Alive Emerge." Currently sponsoring seven talented individuals, Alive India aims to support more through their scholarship program.

The concert series wasn't just about music but a heartfelt initiative to uplift emerging musicians. As Spring Fest concluded, supporters are urged to join Alive India in their noble cause, aiming to make a difference in aspiring musicians' lives across the country.

BM Trippin' Tales — Consumer Connect Initiative

To trek or not, that is the question when it comes to Western Ghats

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TWEETS @sridharvMIRROR

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre recently announced the introduction of online booking for treks in the Western Ghats. This has stirred up a debate. On one hand, experts believe that this initiative will not only enhance tourism but also address safety concerns and create employment opportunities in the region. However, there are concerns among those who oppose permitting treks across the Western Ghats due to its status as a highly eco-sensitive zone. They advocate for stricter regulations to preserve the region's biodiversity and ecological balance.

"Introducing online booking for treks in the Western Ghats is a significant step towards ensuring the safety of trekkers and promoting sustainable tourism," said Minister Khandre. The Western Ghats are renowned for their scenic beauty and attract numerous trekkers every year. However, many trekking spots in the region fall within eco-sensitive zones, posing risks to both trekkers and the environment. Despite bans on unauthorised treks, incidents of individuals venturing into restricted areas and getting lost have been reported in the past.

In an effort to curb such unsafe practices, the forest department intensified enforcement measures, including imposing penalties and booking cases against offenders. However, illegal entry into forests persists, prompting the need for alternative solutions. Experts suggest that implementing online booking systems for treks will enable the forest department to establish clear rules and regulations. They emphasise on the importance of guided treks accompanied by forest guards to ensure the safety of trekkers and prevent them from straying off designated routes.

Forest department has intensified enforcement measures for Ghats trekkers

Hassan Deputy Conservator of Forests Sourabh Kumar stated, "We are receiving requests for implementation of guided treks with strict adherence to safety protocols. However, no decision has been taken yet as this will involve thorough site inspections and the development of comprehensive guidelines to mitigate risks." However, local stakeholders, including members of the Homestays Owners Association in Sakaleshpur are optimistic about the guided treks. They believe that allowing guided tours at selected sites will not only enhance the local economy but also promote responsible tourism practices. Kumaraswamy, a representative of the Homestays Owners Association in Sakaleshpur, commented, "There are numerous picturesque locations around Sakaleshpur that can be explored through guided treks. This initiative will not only benefit the local community but also safeguard the environment."

As discussions continue regarding the implementation of online booking for treks in the Western Ghats, stakeholders remain committed to finding solutions that balance conservation efforts with sustainable tourism practices.

Governor's address during Budget Session in spotlight

Over 1.2 cr families coming out of poverty line due to guarantee schemes, says Guv, even as BJP cries foul

More than 1.2 crore families are coming out of the poverty line and rising to the middle class status because of the guarantee schemes implemented by the Karnataka Government, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot said on Monday projecting the state's model of development.

In his customary address to both Houses of Legislature at the beginning of the budget session, he also said Karnataka gets less in terms of tax share (devolution), despite being ranked second among the states that collect highest tax in the country, remarks seen as the Congress government's dig at the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

Interestingly, BJP legislators were seen wearing saffron shawls during the proceedings and shouted "Jai Sri Ram", "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" slogans at the end of the Governor's speech.

"In today's context of increasing economic inequality in the country, Karnataka is leading economically by following the path of development, by reducing economic inequality," Gehlot said, adding due to the guarantee schemes implemented by it, more than 1.2 crore families are coming out of the poverty line and rising to the middle class status.

Development not only means economic development but also includes sustainable development and social harmony, and with these factors the government has been following the "Karnataka Model" from the moment it came to power, he said. "My Government's aim is to further strengthen this model and make Karnataka state unique in the entire country." The government's five guarantee schemes have provided solace to the people suffering from growing economic inequality, the Governor further said.

"It is a global record that more than five crore people of the State will be promoted to middle class status by this one decision (guarantee schemes) of my Government," Gehlot said.

Karnataka's guarantee schemes are a model for the country, he said, adding that other governments are competing to adopt them.

The five guarantee schemes are: 200 units of free power to all households (Gruha Jyoti), Rs 2,000 monthly assistance to woman head of every family (Gruha Lakshmi), payment of cash in lieu of 5 kg of rice to every member of a BPL household (Anna Bhagya), Rs 3,000 every month for unemployed graduate youth and Rs 1,500 for unemployed diploma holders (in the age group of 18-25) for two years (YuvaNidhi) and free travel for women in public transport buses (Shakti). **PTI**

Marshalls stand in front of the Vidhana Soudha waiting to receive the governor and all leaders ahead of the Budget Session that kicked off on Monday

'Speaking lies'

Opposition BJP in Karnataka on Monday accused the Congress government of making Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot "speak lies" in his customary address to both Houses of Legislature, and alleged that it has portrayed the previous BJP government's programmes as its own.
Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai made the charge after the governor's address at the beginning of the budget session.
"The Congress government has made the governor speak lies in his address. Congress has portrayed the schemes brought by the previous BJP government and the schemes of the Central government as its own," Ashoka said.
Speaking to reporters here, he said, "Although they (Congress) claim that they have brought five guarantees, the 'Yuva Nidhi' scheme has not yet reached the hands of the unemployed youth. They say they have given drought relief, but compensation should not be paid in installments. The previous BJP government had given the compensation to farmers in one go."
Former CM Basavaraj Bommai termed the governor's address as "disappointing" and that he had never heard such a "lackluster" speech so far.

Chargesheet filed in murder of air hostess and her family

The Udupi police on Monday filed the chargesheet in the sensational case of the murder of a young air hostess and her family members, before a judicial magistrate's court near here.

Police said the investigation into the case has been completed and the chargesheet was filed by the investigation team within the stipulated period of 90 days.

The case pertains to the murder of four members of a family who were stabbed inside their house at Nejaru in Udupi on November 12 last year, allegedly by the sole accused in the case, Praveen Arun Chowgule. Chowgule, who was employed as a member of the cabin crew of a private airline company, had targeted one of the victims, Aynaz Mohammed (21), a trainee air hostess, who had earlier worked with him. Police cited his "possessiveness" and "problems in their relationship" as his motives for allegedly attacking her.

Four members of family were stabbed to death inside their house last year over relationship troubles

Aynaz's mother Haseena (47), elder sister Afnan (23) and brother Aseem (14) were the other victims.

Police said that they were in the house when Chowgule came to attack Aynaz and were also allegedly stabbed to death by the accused. Haseena's mother-in-law, Hakira, was also attacked, but survived after locking herself in the toilet.

Chowgule was arrested two days after the crime and has been in judicial custody since then.

The court had earlier rejected his bail petition, and a recent application for parole to attend the last rites of his brother who passed away early this month. **PTI**

KL Rahul ruled out, Padikkal named as replacement

Senior batter has reached only 90% of match fitness, says BCCI

Senior India batter KL Rahul was on Monday ruled out of the third Test against England after failing to fully recover from his quadriceps strain that forced him to miss the second match in Visakhapatnam.

Devdutt Padikkal, the talented Karnataka left-hander who is enjoying a great first class season, replaced Rahul in the squad.

"KL Rahul, whose availability for the remaining three Tests was subject to fitness, has been ruled out of the third Test against England in Rajkot. Rahul has reached 90 per cent of match fitness and is progressing well under the supervision of the BCCI Medical Team," the BCCI said in a press release.

Rahul will continue his recovery at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru as he looks to return for the fourth and fifth Test. The series is currently locked 1-1.

The selectors had earlier named both Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja in the squad subject to clearance from the BCCI's medical team.

"KL Rahul hasn't yet reported in Rajkot. Ravindra Jadeja, the local boy has linked up with the team. It was always a case of subject to fitness and BCCI medical team is still not confident that he is match fit," a senior BCCI source told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

In his most recent Ranji Trophy match, the 23-year-old Padikkal scored 151 with the chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar watching his knock from the stands.

Padikkal has been in excellent form this season.

Having started with a 193 against Punjab in the opening game, he struck 103 against Goa.

In his recent Ranji Trophy match, the 23-year-old Padikkal scored 151 with the chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar watching

Besides his exploits in Ranji, Padikkal also scored 105, 65 and 21 in his three innings for India A in the two unofficial Tests against England Lions. **PTI**

Disabled persons awaiting docs at govt hospitals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

including NIMHANS. She was very happy to have NIMHANS on the list of government hospitals as she is residing near Talaghattapura. However, she has not been able to get an appointment with the neurologist at NIMHANS even one year after enrolling her name for UDID Card.

"I was very happy to see NIMHANS included in the names of government hospitals. It is the only hospital which is near to my residence. However, I am disappointed and shocked with the apathetic attitude of people working at NIMHANS' reception. I contacted them on the phone for an appointment with the designated doctor.

They are insisting I visit the hospital for registration of my name. They told me that I have to visit again after registering my name. Why should I register my name again after registering online?" Tejaswini wondered.

She said it would be difficult for PwDs to wait for hours at the government hospitals due to lack of toilet facilities.

"Most of the toilets are either unhygienic or not PwD-friendly. There is a chance of PwDs contracting viral infections due to unhygienic conditions at the toilets. I can afford to visit the government hospital again and again for verification as my husband can take me to the hospital in his car but what is the fate of PwDs who do not have such a facility?" she asked.

Stating that the government, especially the health department, has to focus on ensuring PwDs get verification done on a priority basis, she said

KAUSHIK JN

the government has made arrangements for senior citizens to exercise their franchise at their doorsteps.

"The government must make arrangements to enable the PwDs to have verification certificates at their door steps," she said.

Sudarshan Belur, a social activist, recalled how he was shocked at the doctors' apathy at Victoria Hospital a few years ago. "The government must ensure doctors are available at government hospitals for the benefit of PwDs who cannot wait for hours like normal people," said Belur.

Expressing disappointment with the discrimination and apathy of government officials, Chaitra Hegde, a resident of Kalgar near Sirsi, said government officials rejected her application for pension.

"The government officials told me that I am not eligible for pension as my father owns agricultural land. I am 38-year-old. I cannot depend on my father for everything. I also need some money. It will be a great help for me if the government gives pension to me," said Chaitra.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru Urban district health officer Ravindranath Meti said instructions were given to the medical officers of respective hospitals to issue verification certificates to PwDs who have applied for Unique Disability Identity Cards.

"I will direct the medical officer concerned to attend to Tejaswini Hegde and do the needful," said the district health officer.

The state health commissioner Randeep D has assured to look into the matter.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Raghavendra Shetty S/o Basavaraja Shetty Residing at No.20th Main Road, J C Nagar, Kurubarahalli, Bangalore - 560086. My name mentioned in Old Passport as Raghavendra. Hereby Declare that Raghavendra Shetty & Raghavendra Both the name belongs to same person. I'm Using Raghavendra Shetty for Future Documents Vide Affidavit dated 5.02.2024 Sworn Before Notary Onkarappa N.R, Bengaluru.

I, Santhosh Kumar alias Santhosh Kumar Ramachandra, R/a Flat A-230, Platinum Gardenia, Kemba thhalli Main road, Anjanapura, B'lore 83. I have changed my name to Santosh Kumar Ramachandra s/o Ramachandra Budigere Thimmapaiah. Vide affidavit dated 12-02-24. Sworn before notary B. Sheshagiri B'lore.

I Vohra Jujarbhai Saifuddinbhai R/o Pariwar Pragathi C Block Flat No -711, 7th Floor 90-1 And 91-2 Begur Hobli Kammanahalli Po: Gottigere 560083 have changed my name to Jujar Mujpurwala S/o Vohra Saifuddinbhai Noorbhai for all purposes

I Baby Jasmin Saba W/o Shahzad Anjum R/at A-402, Excel Stone Florence, Balagere, Varthur Road, Bangalore 560087 have changed name as Jasmin Khan vide affidavit dated 12/02/2024 in front of Notray S.Subashini Bangalore.

I Anjali Khemani, R/O Flat A401,MV Periwinkle Apts, Rachenahalli, Srirampura, Mestripalya,Thanisandra, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560064, have changed my name to Anjali Haresh Khemani.

I, Karthikeyan Hariharan R/o W214 Concorde Silicon Valley Neeladri Road Electronic City Phase 1 560100 have changed my minor daughter's name from Harinika Karthikeyan to K Harinika for all purposes.

I, Roshan Victor Dsouza R/o E904 I Towers Exente Service Road, Kamadhenu Layout, Electroncis City, Bengaluru 560100 have changed my minor son's name from Naomh Roshan Dsouza to Naomh Dsouza for all purposes.

I, Roshan Victor Dsouza R/o E904 I Towers Exente Service Road, Kamadhenu Layout, Electroncis City, Bengaluru 560100 have changed my minor son's name from Naomh Roshan Dsouza to Naomh Dsouza for all purposes.

I Nagaraj M S/o Manohar R/o #52, PRAYAG NIVAS 8TH MAIN ROAD 4TH BLOCK NANDINI LAYOUT BANGALORE -560096, have changed my name to Nagraj Manohar Amberkhane

I, Tarrannnum Tahara bi W/o Mohammad Latif Sultan R/o 09 Coffee Board Colony Shampur Main Rd, B'luru-560045 have changed my name to Tarannum for all purposes.

I, Mamta Kumari W/o Subhash Chandra Jhajharia R/o No.53-2, Flat No. 007, Bindu Amulya Apartments, Muddinapalya, Anjana Nagar, Bangalore - 560091 have changed my name to Mamta Jhajharia for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 10/02/2024

I, Soumitra Mallick, R/a Flat 1005, Tower 5, Chowriappa Constellation, Geddalahalli, Hennur Bagalur Road, B'lore 77. I have changed my name to Soumitra Mallik. Vide affidavit dated 12-02-24. Sworn before notary B. Sheshagiri B'lore.

I, Sahana Bhat D/o Vishwanatha Bhat R/o No 303, Magnolia Block, Esteem Gardenia, 15th Main Road, E-Block, Sahakarnagar, Blr-92 Changed My Name From Sahana to Sahana Bhat for All Future Purposes.

I Rashi Keshava Rao S/O, Gurunatha Rao R/o No 29, 1st Cross, 1st Block, Tc Palya Main Road, Akshaya Nagar, Ramamurthy Nagar, Dooravani Nagar, Bangalore 560016 have changed my name to G. Rushi Keshava Rao.

I, Mohammed Haneef R/o Kharadi Mohalla Sira Tumkur-572137 have changed my minor daughter name from Kuteja Tul Kubra to Kuteja Tul Kubbra.

I Melvin Steevan R/o # 35, George & Alice, 7th Cross, Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027, have changed my name to G.Melvin Steven vide affidavit dt 10.02.2024 before notary B.M.Chandrashekar

I, Alfred John, R/a 46/1, 7th Main Road, Vasanthnagar, B'lore 560001. I have changed my name to P Alfred John. Vide affidavit dated 12-02-24. Sworn before notary N Mahesha B'lore.

I Robbin Steven R/o # 35, George & Alice, 7th Cross, Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027, have changed my name to Robin Steven vide affidavit dt 10.02.2024 before notary B.M.Chandrashekar

I Hemavathi W/O, Keshava.k R/o N0.590,4th Main,10th Cross,3rd Block,opp Canara Bank,bel Layout, vidyaranyapura,bengaluru-560097 have changed my name to Hemavathi Keshava.

I, Chaavi M Tated, D/o C. Mahesh Kumar, R/o 992, 2nd main Road, 4th Block Rajajingar, Bengaluru have changed my name from Chaavi Mahesh Kumar to Chaavi M Tated for all purposes.

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GALLERIA

Do you have wildlife items to declare?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

because of a lack of awareness of the laws, and gave nod to provide a three-month window to surrender these items.

State forest department officials said the three-month timeline will close on April 9. After that, there will not be further opportunity to surrender items.

"It was considered necessary to provide one opportunity to these people who missed out on declarations in the previously provided windows, to surrender wildlife articles, which is the property of the state government. However, if the current window is missed, any person found in possession or involved in the trade of wildlife products will be prosecuted under the Wildlife Protection Act," added Pushkar.

As per the new rule, after the receipt of the articles surrendered, the authority who has received them may inquire to verify and confirm that the articles surrendered are not sourced from the hunting of any wild animal after the commencement of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. If so, the person who surrendered the article will be prosecuted under the Act. The inquiries will be completed by or before ninety days from the date on which the artefacts have been surrendered.

The surrendered items will be disposed of under the provisions of the Disposal of Wild Animal Articles Rules, 2023. "We are receiving inquiries from the Kodagu Circle and expect some items surrendered from that zone. Traditionally, many from the area inherit these items from forefathers but they do not have the certificate of possession. We would like to see more people coming forward. The scheme is being advertised through Karnataka forest department's social media sites as well. However, the response has been lukewarm so far," said Pushkar.

According to the Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972 and the recent amendments made by the central government in 2022, illegal stocking, trade, etc., of wildlife articles is a punishable offence.

A similar 30-day window was opened under Wildlife (Conservation) (Karnataka Rules) in 1973, and thereafter in 2003 for 180 days to obtain a certificate of possession of wildlife items.

HEALTH TIP: Vitamin C is essential for the synthesis of collagen, a protein that provides structure to the skin

If your skin tends to shine persistently, especially in the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin), it's likely that you have oily skin

BangaloreMirror | 9
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Bare essentials

Your guide to incorporating sustainable aromatherapy into your life

With wellness being the new way of life, aromatherapy has become a vital part of every home in some or the other way. Aromatherapy uses naturally derived essential oils for a holistic healing treatment to promote health and wellbeing. It works through the sense of smell and skin absorption. How? The essential oils used in aromatherapy come with benefits to help fight infections, reduce stress, relieve pain, or just help unwind at the end of the day. The practices have been in existence for over a thousand years, originating from Egypt, China, and India, with each having its variations. And it's safe to say that we have all witnessed the benefits of improved sleep quality, reduced stress, and increased focus. Tara Malhotra, founder of Nytarra, breaks down all you need to know about this fragrant therapy.

What Is Sustainable Aromatherapy?

Today, aromatherapy as a concept has evolved and stands at the forefront with the wellness industry being a testimony to this massive shift. It is not just about tiny vials of essential oils anymore but about using these oils through diffusers, bath salts, wax tablets, soaps, etc. The market is filled with product options, and everyone can get a piece of the aromatherapy pie to indulge in. Having said that, given the demand, there has also been a rise in chemically induced aromatics and diluted or synthetic essential oils. So, the need of the hour is to invest in more sustainable choices and practices.

When it comes to sustainable aromatherapy, it's important to make sure the products use natural and environment-friendly ingredients and follow sustainable packaging methods. In simpler words, be kind to yourself and the environment. Slowly and eventually, people are accepting these products as an alternative to chemical-laden room fresheners/sprays and scented candles that produce carcinogens or volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like formaldehyde, toluene, benzene, and more. Their long-term use can aggravate respiratory diseases and migraines, and degrade indoor air quality. Taking these hazards and health issues into consideration, the EPA recommends minimum use of sprays, and the safest option can be essential oils, naturally sourced oils to be precise. Here, we tell you how to make the switch.

Swap Room Freshener Blocks For Soy Wax Tablets

Soy wax tablets are a great new replacement for conventional room freshener blocks. Hand poured and infused with dried fruit peels, flowers, and natural essential oils to leave behind a subtle scent and keep every nook and cranny of your home and workspace fresh. These tablets work wonderfully in closed spaces or wardrobes.

Invest In Cold Processed Soaps

Cold process soaps are handcrafted soaps that are not heated during production. This method keeps all the properties of the natural ingredients intact. Not only are these soaps great for retaining hydration of the skin, but when hung with a ribbon or cute perforated pouch in your bathroom, they act as a terrific ornamental freshener. It slowly dispenses fragrance and keeps the bathroom fresh and odour-free.

Use Essential Oils Instead Of Scents And Sprays

Essential oils are one of the safest and most natural substitutes for sprays or scented candles. These oils can automatically uplift the overall ambiance of a small room, foyer, powder room, walk-in, closet, office, small bedroom, and even cars. The easiest way to use them would be spreading them over dried homemade potpourri, ceramic fragrance diffusers, or mixing light essential oils with water or using them as a natural room freshener.

Choose Non-Toxic Diffusers

Natural fragrance diffusers like reed sticks, potpourri, ceramic, and clay diffusers are great tools for dispensing a long-lasting and organic scent. These types of diffusers are 100% non-toxic and an amazing addition to your décor.

Opt For Dhoop And Incense Sticks

Hand-rolled dhoop sticks made from natural ingredients are a great charcoal and carcinogenic-free alternative for an earthy aromatherapy ritual. The naturally sourced essential oils and dried flowers used in it make it a sustainable option.

—by Kalwyna Rathod, Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Snacking on tree nuts boosts health, does not lead to weight gain: Study

Snacking on tree nuts like pistachios, almonds does not lead to belly fat, rather they help in better weight management and are a more efficient source of energy, according to a study.

As tree nuts are high in calorie and fat content, a common misconception persists that eating nuts causes weight gain. But various studies have shown that eating tree nuts, like pistachios, daily is an easy way to experience a flavourful, nutritious, and portable snack that can reinvigorate a person.

To explore further, researchers from Vanderbilt University Medical Center in the US, fed 84 young adults (22-36 years old) who had at least one metabolic syndrome risk factor either a snack of one ounce of mixed, unsalted tree nuts (including pistachios) or one ounce of a carbohydrate snack twice per day for 16 weeks.

Without the study participants making any other changes to their diet (without restricting calorie intake) or lifestyle habits (without changing physical activity habits), researchers saw a 67 per cent reduction in metabolic syndrome risk for females and a 42 per cent reduction in risk for males who ate tree nuts.

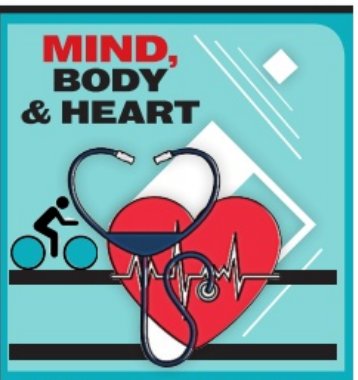
Participants eating one ounce of mixed tree nuts two times per day (including pistachios) had no change in their energy intake or body weight over the 16-week study period.

Further, in female participants, there was evidence that eating the mixed tree nuts led to reduced waist circumference (abdominal fat), a key risk factor for metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and heart disease.

In male participants, there was evidence that eating the mixed tree nuts led to reduced blood insulin levels, another important risk factor.

Participants eating tree nuts were also able to use fat for energy more efficiently compared to a carbohydrate snack, which may explain why the group eating tree nuts, like pistachios, did not increase body weight or body fat during the study period, said the team in the paper published in the journal Nutrients.

— IANS



All you need to know about...

Pain in cancer survivors

Staying physically active helps

People who have had cancer frequently feel persistent pain, but a new study suggests that staying physically active may help reduce its intensity.

The study

The study is published by Wiley online in CANCER, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

Effect on cancer-related pain

Although physical activity has been shown to lessen various types of pain, its effects on cancer-related pain are unclear. To investigate, a team led by senior author Erika Rees-Punia, PhD, MPH, of the American Cancer Society, and first author Christopher T.V. Swain, PhD, of the University of Melbourne, in Australia, analysed information pertaining to 51,439 adults without a history of cancer and 10,651 adults with a past cancer diagnosis. Participants were asked, "How would you rate your pain on average," with responses ranging from 0 (no pain) to 10 (worst pain imaginable). Participants were also asked about their usual physical activity.

Recommended time

U.S. guidelines recommend 150 minutes (2 hours 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) to 150 minutes (2 hours 30 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.

Reduces all kinds of pain

Based on responses, the investigators found that, for individuals who had cancer in the past as well as for those without a history of cancer, more physical activity was linked with lower pain intensity. The extent of the association was similar for both groups, indicating exercise may reduce cancer-related pain just as it does for other types of pain studied in the past.

—IANS

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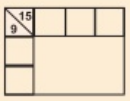
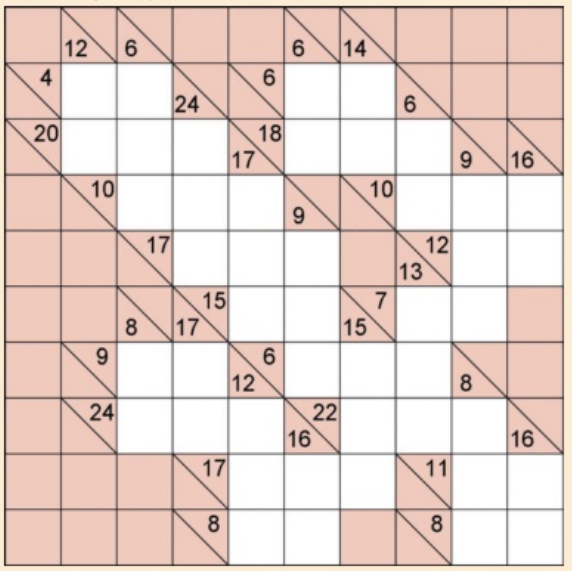
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas



for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



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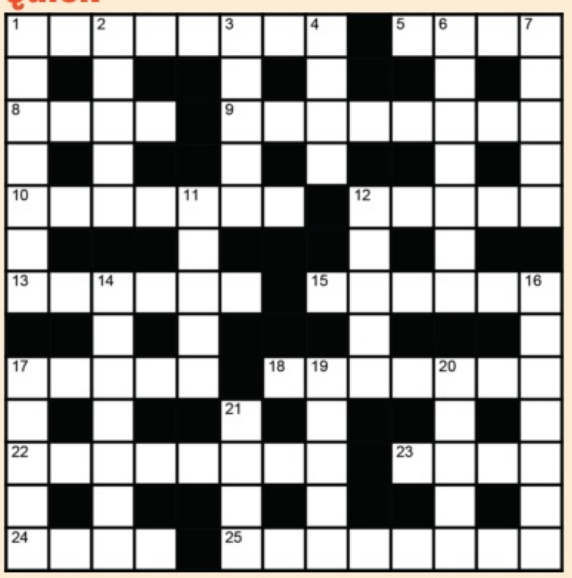


ACROSS

1 Capital of Sudan (8)
5 Formal prohibitions (4)
8 British nobleman (4)
9 Fast runner (8)
10 Indian flat bread (7)
12 Chagrin (5)
13 Pork curry (6)
15 Photographic device (6)
17 Filled to satisfaction (5)
18 Receipts, especially as a profit (7)
22 Poster announcing theatre programme (8)
23 Eye part (4)
24 A friend in need (4)
25 Begin or commence a journey (6,2)

DOWN

1 Patella (7)
2 Main artery (5)
3 Start (5)
4 Extra, in addition to (4)
6 An old piece of furniture (7)
7 Loose rock debris (5)
11 Felt sore (5)
12 Piece of wood (5)
14 Seven-a-side court game (7)
16 Refrain, forbear (7)
17 Brownish colour (5)
19 Extemporize (2-3)
20 2022 Wimbledon Champion ____ Djokovic (5)
21 1.61 kms? (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Q EQUALS T

LRXWXLQMW GN QRM GUDBH-NM WMGOMC CYVO GOQY NQMXCJ LYOQGOBXOLM.

Linemaro

Sailors used to wear gold earrings to pay for their funeral in case they died in foreign lands

Mindchow

If you can learn from defeat, you haven't really lost

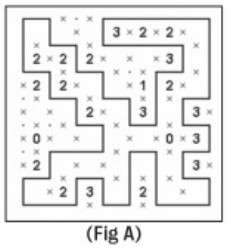
Joke of the day

There's no such thing as addiction, there's only things that you enjoy doing more than life

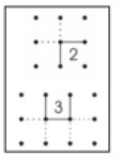
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

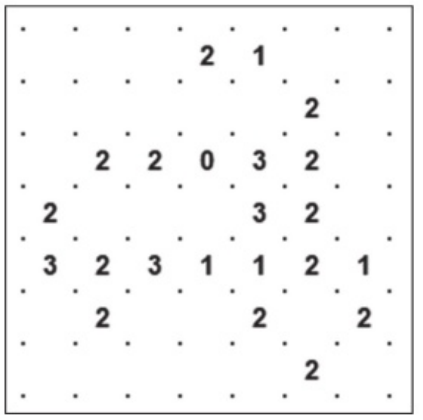


(Fig B) Not Allowed

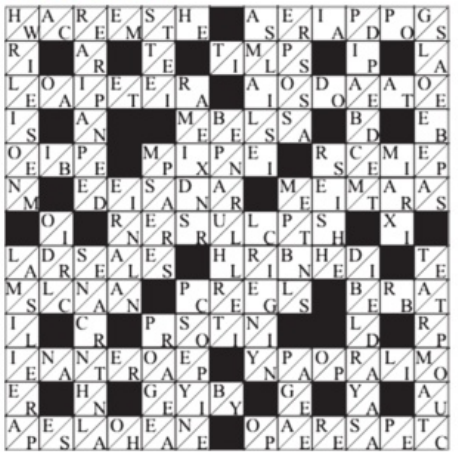
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



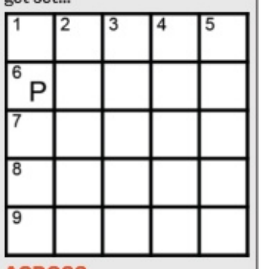
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 A pain; 6 On GPO; 7 Optic; 8 On lea; 9 Gruel

DOWN

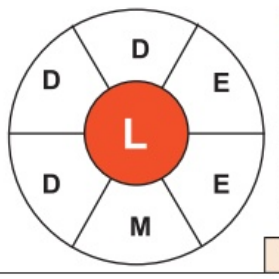
1 Papal; 2 Oil up; 3 Coign; 4 Genoa; 5 Tenor

Mensapuzzle

What number should replace the question mark?

70	91	120
14	13	24
5	7	?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; 03 Good; 04 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

			4		3	5	6	9
		6				1		
	2					8	3	
	4	2	1					8
			3		9			
1					8	6	4	
	7	8					1	
		1				7		
2	3	4	7		5			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 7
1 2 2 6

Medium = 32
1 4 6 6

Hard = 5
2 5 8 4

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

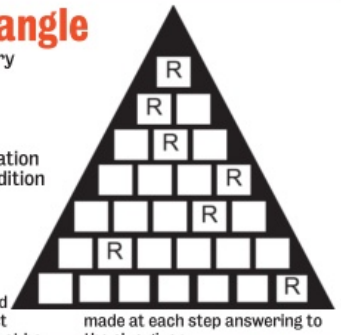
Differences: 1. Pitcher's mound is moved. 2. Bush is missing. 3. Ear is larger. 4. Cap is different. 5. Stripe is added to sleeve. 6. Shorts are longer.

Riddler

How many minutes is it until 3 pm if 30 minutes ago it was five times as many minutes past 10 am?

Alpha triangle

1 Radius in geometry
2 Again, abbr.
3 Live
4 Try a case
5 Fortitude
6 Christmas decoration
7 Atmospheric condition



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

OFF TO THE ANTIQUE STORE!
WHAT DO YOU DO THERE? EXAMINE ANTIQUES WITH A MICROSCOPE?
FIND CLUES IN THE BACKS OF PAINTINGS, LEADING YOU TO A SECRET TREASURE DATING BACK TO THE INCEPTION OF THE UNITED STATES?
DID YOU WATCH "NATIONAL TREASURE" LAST NIGHT?
I DID!

Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may feel happy. Old health issues concerning elders may be resolved. Money that was stuck may be recovered now, which may boost your financial health. People who are in jobs may change their job seeking promotions. Job seekers may get jobs with the help of a friend's reference.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today you may prefer gaining knowledge, and may understand the value of intellectual assets. Sometimes you may control your short temper, which may help you perform your task smoothly .There may be some chance for smooth earning, which may give you comfort in the workflow. You are advised to be careful before making new investments in assets.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may feel dull and you may not be able to enjoy the moments. You may be in a hurry to complete a task given to you. You may make silly mistakes. Your working efficiency may slow down, which may affect your day to day work. Your projects are likely to be delayed, which may affect your professional life.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you may be energetic, and may be more focused, which may speed up your current task. Your subordinates may help you to start a new project, which may give you profit in the near future. You may expect some short trips related to your family issues. Job seekers may hear good news in terms of a job.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may use your creativity at your office or at home, which may enhance your social status. You may be able to control your expenditure on worthless things, which may increase your savings. Love birds are likely to get some support from their family members for marriage. Students may hear good news in terms of academics.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you may be relaxed after a messy situation. Your inner strength may help you implement some difficult decisions in parental business, which may help expand the business. You may help needy people around, which may increase respect for you in the society. Students may find clarity in choosing their career options.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today you may feel dull and your health may not be good. You may also have anxiety and restlessness. You are advised to postpone important investments in the business or real estate. You are advised to avoid rash driving. You should avoid long distance travelling also. You may do some meditation, which will be helpful in getting sound sleep.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today blessings from elders may make you happy, and your invest- ments may give you profits. Losses are converted into profits now. Your savings may boost your bank balance. You may plan to invest in your kid's future also. You may also enjoy some delicious food at home. Your problems related to throat, teeth, ear or nose may be resolved now.

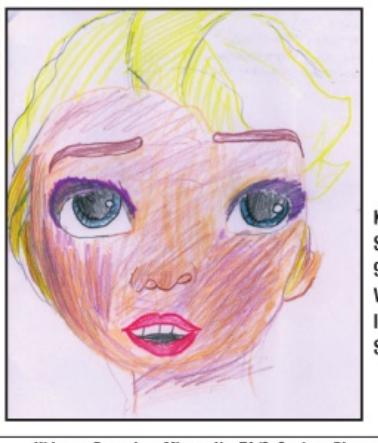
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may enjoy work and you may get some promotion after your hard work. You are likely to help some needy person and your social capital may be increased now. Overworking your mind may make you tired. Due to workload, you may not be able to reach some family get together. Your parents' health may be good.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, projects that were stopped without any reason may start automatically. You may be satisfied at work. You may plan for a short work-related trip. You may also visit some religious places to maintain your internal strength. Your elders may show you the right path, which may help you achieve your goals.

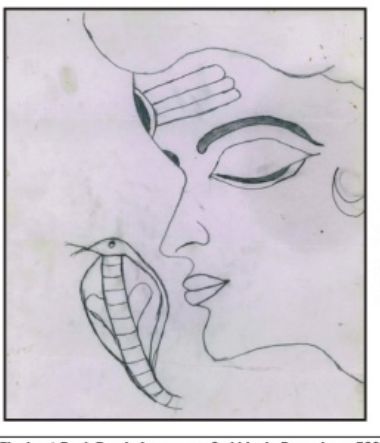
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today you may feel dull and you may also face health issues. It is advised that you keep your mind cool. Read documents carefully before putting your signature. You may face difficulty in recovering your money. You are also advised to avoid adventurous tours. Students are advised to go for in depth study to get success. You may be attracted by the occult also.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today you may be busy at home. You may buy some artefacts or creative items to renovate your house, which may increase your social status. You may also invest in properties and other fixed assets. You are likely to enjoy your romantic moments with the spouse, which may strengthen your bond. Singles may hear good news in terms of marriage.

KIDZONE



Kaveri Sriram, 9 years, Valistus International School



Manith S, 13 years, Icchaa Public School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
=√[(7+3√5)·(7-3√5)]
=√[7^2-(3√5)^2]
=√[7^2-3^2·(√5)^2]
=√[7^2-3^2·(5)]
=√(49-9·5)
=√(49-9·5)
=√(7^2-3^2·5)
=√(49-45)
=√(4)
=√4
=2.

BULL'S EYE
meddle, MEDDLED, meld, melded

FAST FIVE

A	P	I	A	N
P	O	N	G	O
P	I	C	O	T
A	L	O	N	E
L	U	G	E	R

STRIKE OUT

W	A	R	M	T	H		S	E	A	D	O	G		
I		A		E		I	M	P		I		L		
L	O	I	T	E	R		I	O	D	A	T	E		
S		N			E	E	L	S		D		B		
O	B	E		P	I	P	E		R	E	M	E		
			C	H	A	P	A	T	I		P	I	O	U	E
			E			E			T		E		I		E
			N		O		N	O			N		C		
		E	A	R	L		S	P	R	I	N	T	E	R	
		E			L			L			I		A		
		P	L	A	Y	B	I	L	L		U	V	E	A	
		E		B		M		D			O		T		
		S	A	T	E	D		T	A	K	I	N	G	S	
			E			E				N				B	
		P	A	N	D	H	I		C	A	M	E	R	A	
		A			C				L		U				
		C	H	A	P	A	T	I		P	I	O	U	E	
		E			T		E		E		I		E		
		N		O		N	O			N		C			
		E	A	R	L		S	P	R	I	N	T	E	R	
		E			L			L			I		A		
		P	L	A	Y	B	I	L	L		U	V	E	A	
		E		B		M		D			O		T		
		S	A	T	E	D		T	A	K	I	N	G	S	
			E			E				N				B	
		P	A	N	D	H	I		C	A	M	E	R	A	
A	L	L	Y		E	M	B	A	R	K	O	N			

QUICK

K	H	A	R	T	O	U	M		B	A	N	S		
N		O		N		O		N		C				
E	A	R	L		S	P	R	I	N	T	E	R		
E		T		E		E		I		E				
C	H	A	P	A	T	I		P	I	O	U	E		
		A			C				L		U			
P	A	N	D	H	I		C	A	M	E	R	A		
E			E				N				B			
S	A	T	E	D		T	A	K	I	N	G	S		
	E		B		M		D			O		T		
P	L	A	Y	B	I	L	L		U	V	E	A		
I		L			I				L		A			
L	A	Y		E	M	B	A	R	K	O	N			

MENSA PUZZLE
5; 70 ÷ 14 = 5; 91 ÷ 13 = 7, 120 ÷ 24 = 5.

QUOTE UNCODE
Character is the impulse refined down into steady continuance.

RIDDLER
Forty-five minutes

SUDOKU

8	1	7	4	2	3	5	6	9
3	5	6	9	8	7	1	2	4
4	2	9	5	6	1	8	3	7
7	4	2	1	5	6	3	9	8
6	8	5	3	4	9	2	7	1
1	9	3	2	7	8	6	4	5
5	7	8	6	9	2	4	1	3
9	6	1	8	3	4	7	5	2
2	3	4	7	1	5	9	8	6

ALPHA TRIANGLE
R, Re, Are, Hear, Heart, Wreath, Weather.

GO FIGURE
Easy
2 − 2 + 6 + 1 = 7
Medium
6 × 6 x 1 − 4 = 32
Hard
4 − 5 + 8 − 2 = 5

LOOP

KAKURO

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Sophie enjoys date night — Actress Sophie Turner has been spotted on a date night with her new boyfriend Peregrine Pearson, days after going official with their romance. The 'Game of Thrones' star split from ex-husband Joe Jonas last summer

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Entertainment Industry Promotion

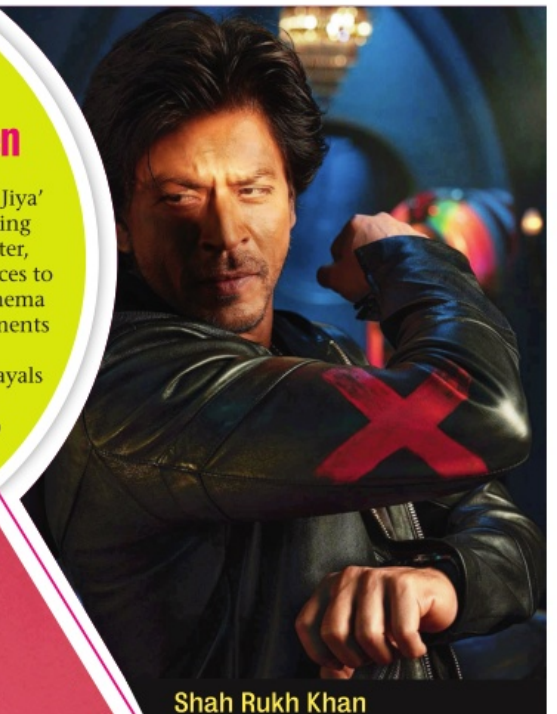
ROMANCING ROBOTS

Actors who have played robotic characters on silver screen

The release of 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya' has captivated cinephiles with its compelling storyline, particularly Kriti Sanon's character, which has thoroughly entertained audiences to the last minute. Over the years, Indian cinema has explored the theme of technological advancements through characters portraying robots. From Kriti Sanon's romantic entertainer to the iconic portrayals by Rajinikanth and Shah Rukh Khan, here's a glimpse of actors who have breathed life into robotic characters on the silver screen.

—ETimes

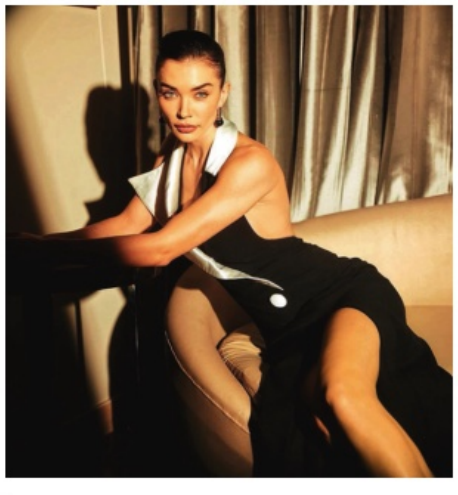
Rajinikanth
Superstar Rajinikanth mesmerised audiences with his portrayal of the humanoid robot Chitti in '2.0.' Directed by Shankar, the film delves into the conflict between Chitti and Pakshi Rajan, a vengeful former ornithologist.



Shah Rukh Khan
In Anubhav Sinha's 'Ra. One', Shah Rukh Khan takes on the role of the superhero robot G.One. Despite mixed reviews, the film stands out for its technical prowess, earning praise for its ahead-of-its-time VFX. The film also starred Arjun Rampal, who played the negative robot Ra.One, and his character too received immense appreciation.

Kriti Sanon
In the upcoming Hindi science fiction romantic comedy 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya,' Kriti Sanon steps into the role of a highly intelligent female robot. The film explores the romantic journey between Shahid Kapoor's robot scientist and Kriti's robotic character.

Amy Jackson
Actress Amy Jackson adds her charm to the robotic world in Shankar's '2.0' alongside Rajinikanth. While the film may not have received universal acclaim, the first part, 'Enthiran,' remains a hallmark of Indian science fiction cinema. '2.0' did good business at the box office, despite mediocre reviews.



Priyanka Chopra
In the movie 'Love Story 2050,' there is a song titled 'Milo Na Milo.' In this particular song sequence, Priyanka Chopra's character, Sana Bedi, is shown as a lifelike humanoid robot. The song features futuristic visuals and explores the theme of love between a human and a robot. The movie revolved around the theme of time travel."

It's snowtime folks

Actress Sai Pallavi and actor Junaid Khan - the son of Bollywood superstar Aamir khan, were seen in a picture from the sets of their upcoming yet-to-be-titled film.

The two can be seen team shooting in Sapporo, Japan in the snow festival. In the pictures, one can see a hazy view of Junaid Khan's look for this upcoming film, with Sai Pallavi who is a leading lady in the film. They will be seen playing a romantic role alongside each other.

The film, produced by Aamir Khan Productions, initially faced a few challenges due to unexpected snowfall but now, the production is going smoothly after removal of the hiccups. Junaid and Sai Pallavi, began shooting for their upcoming film on December 1. The yet-to-be-titled film is a love story and as per earlier information, it is set in the city of Sapporo in Japan where the team had gone for a recce, a couple of months back.

The first schedule of the film was shot in Mumbai. A source close to the film had earlier said, "The team saw the famous Snow Festival during their recce, which will also feature in the film as it will see the city of Sapporo set in the winters, and the team absolutely loved it. They were so thrilled by the picturesque landscapes and the unique cultural experience".

Meanwhile, Junaid is set to make his film debut with the upcoming film 'Maharaj', directed by Siddharth P Malhotra. —IANS

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Actor to director

Suchan Shetty, who played the forest guard in box-office hit movie Kantara, is set to make a debut as director with the film God Promise, in which he also plays the lead.

"I have worked as a script writer for the movie Girmit. I played the villain in Kadal directed by Ravi Basrur. Some real incidents are an inspiration for me to write the script for this movie. The shooting of the movie is expected to begin next month in and around Kollur and Maranakatte for 27 days," said Suchan.

The director said the selection of cast is in process. "We are yet to finalise on the heroine. I am confident we will get a suitable actress for this family-oriented movie. The movie revolves around members of a family in a village. It will have sentiments and comedy elements," he said.

Maitri Manjunath is bankrolling this movie under the Maitri Productions banner. It is the second movie for Manjunath. Guruprasad Narnad is the cinematographer.

Versatile show

Versatile character actor Rangayana Raghu is very happy with the team of the movie Shakhahaari for honouring him with the Abhinayaasura title. Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar and director Duniya Suri were guests at the function held at Kalavidara Sangha. Rangayana Raghu plays the lead in Shakhahaari, scheduled for release on February 16.

Rangayana Raghu has been associated with the Kannada film industry for the last 35 years. "I have acted in 350 Kannada movies. Appu sir has helped me a lot. I will never forget director Suri's help and cooperation," said

Rangayana Raghu.

Director Duniya Suri said he met Rangayana Raghu during the shooting of the movie Mani directed by Yogaraj Bhat. "I think the Kannada film industry underutilized Ranayana Raghu's talent," said Suri.

Sandeep Sunkad, who debuts as a director in Sandalwood with this movie, said that he was lucky to have Rajesh Kilambi and Ranjini Prasanna as producers for this movie.